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Fight & Flight

by [Lycoriseum](#)

Summary

Pharah/Mercy pieces. Written at various points in their relationship.

Falling

Chapter Summary

First kiss.

If she got a dollar for each time she had to patch an Overwatch agent up, Angela fancied she could afford an island with impenetrable security to take refuge in until this mess was over.

Sighing internally, she removed Genji's last damaged energy core from his back. A team had just returned from a mission in Bordeaux, successfully wiping out the headquarters of a minor terrorist faction. Six agents were deployed, and only one – Tracer – returned unharmed. From what she heard, this faction was still relatively small, but surprisingly well-armed – by Talon. It made the mission a tad bit harder, especially with one of Talon's best assassins sniping away at them from the back. Angela suspected that was why Tracer avoided the med bay, even after being ordered to report for a routine check-up.

Picking up a replacement core with her forceps, Angela carefully slid it into the empty slot. She watched as the suit accepted the new core, ring of light glowing an affirmative green.

"And we are done," she announced, placing her forceps back on the surgical tray. "Unless something else is troubling you?"

"No, I feel well. Thank you, Doctor."

Polite. Angela appreciated that about Genji. He was always polite, even when their rapport was fragile in the beginning. He was also her best patient, the only one who did not fidget incessantly while being tended to, and who actually adhered to her orders for rest after treatment.

"Oh, and Genji," Angela said as the man hopped onto his feet. "Tell Lena to look for me if she needs...anything."

Genji nodded, requiring no explanation. He had, after all, been with Overwatch for a long time, and was the first one to quietly tell Angela that they encountered Widowmaker in the field.

As the man marched out of the med bay, Angela approached the last of her patients.

"Now, any other wounds aside from the burn on your face?" she asked, passing the medical scanner down Fareeha's body.

"Nothing serious, I think. But I have a headache, my vision is a little blurred. It hurts when I breathe. My left forearm aches when I move it too," her patient reported.

Angela nodded, eyes reading the logs on her scanner as Fareeha listed her corresponding symptoms. The woman displayed a keener awareness of her body's happenings than more agents she had treated. A result of her military background, perhaps.

"You have a grade 2 concussion, 3 fractured ribs and micro fractures along your left forearm," Angela confirmed. She looked up at her patient, only to find dark eyes gazing intently back at her.

For a split second, all thought fled from her mind. No list of treatments. No words of comfort. No banter to keep her patient's mind off the pain. Just Angela, Fareeha, and those eyes that held her captive.

A hint of playfulness entered Fareeha's gaze, the proverbial bucket of cold water that snapped Angela back to reality. Her mind fumbled, realising that she let herself stare for a second too long, looking for something to bridge the silence. To cover up her minor lapse.

"Did you fire a rocket too close to yourself again?" Angela asked, grateful that her voice did not waver. She turned to her medical trolley, gathering the items required for treatment.

"It was a tactical decision," Fareeha explained.

"It always is. Take your top off," the doctor ordered. She steeled herself as Fareeha complied, peeling off the upper portion of her uniform, leaving only a sports bra.

Angela passed an experienced eye over Fareeha's body, cataloguing the burn on her cheek, the dark bruises above her ribs and outer forearm. All-in-all, not a serious case. The doctor turned to her equipment, filling a syringe with anesthesia, trying to ignore her increased heart rate and the eyes on her back. *She is a colleague*, Angela reminded herself. *A regular patient. Do not get attached. Do not develop preferences.*

She returned to Fareeha, syringe in one hand, motioning for her to sit up straight. Noting the slight wince as Fareeha obeyed, Angela placed one hand on her uninjured side. *To steady her.*

"I'm giving you an anesthetic for your ribs," Angela explained, even though they had been through this before. She wanted something, anything as a distraction.

"No magical healing staff?" Fareeha's smile became a little stiff as the needle pricked her skin.

"The caduceus is not magic, Fareeha. No matter what Hana says," the doctor said reprovingly, remembering the time Hana had proclaimed her as the squad's '*cleric*'. "It requires extensive maintenance and a large amount of energy to work. We don't have the resources to waste it on minor injuries."

"I'll remember that," Fareeha said simply, soft smile a permanent fixture on her face.

"We'll see." Angela set the syringe aside, proceeding to bandage the woman's arm. "Now, no physical activity for the next week. Understood?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"If I catch you sneaking gym time again, you'll be sedated for the rest of the recovery period."

"Are you even allowed to do that?"

"Try me." Angela cut the bandage and secured it around the woman's arm.

"Maybe I will," Fareeha replied, earning a withering look.

"I'm being serious. Look at me," she instructed, picking up the dermal regenerator for the final treatment.

Fareeha tilted her head up, fixing her with an inscrutable gaze. "So was I."

Keeping her hand steady had never been so difficult. Even as she turned Fareeha's head to the side

for better access to the burn, the woman's eyes never left her. It was not uncommon for Angela to get stares and double-takes. She was an attractive woman, and she knew it. She had a fair share of patients and colleagues becoming enamoured with her. It was never really a bother. In fact, it gave her easy access to companionship when she needed it. But god, no one managed to get under her skin like Fareeha before.

Angela found herself tracking Fareeha's movement whenever she entered the room. Being aware of her warmth whenever she stood close. Returning her smiles more comfortably than she did others. Fighting against blushes whenever she paid Angela a compliment. Memorising the curve of her lips whenever she smiles. Throwing caution to the wind and flying after Pharah whenever she soared into the skies. Wanting to place kisses wherever she got hurt, hold her close when fatigue sags her shoulders. When? When did she slip past Angela's defenses?

"Angela?"

She snapped out of her reverie and found herself looking straight back at Fareeha, a trace of concern apparent in the other woman's gaze. It dawned upon her that she had been staring. Her eyes darted towards the wound, only to discover Fareeha's cheek had become smooth again, as though never damaged. Quickly yanking the dermal regenerator away, Angela threw it onto the medical trolley in panic, her heart thudding madly against her chest.

Gott, I am slipping. She held onto the trolley, recollecting herself. Then she turned, apology ready on her tongue, when Fareeha grasped her wrist.

Did she have no time to react, or did she just not want to? Fareeha pulled her close, and Angela offered no resistance when she pressed forward in a tentative kiss.

She froze. Every rule drilled into her bones screamed, waging war with the desire burning in her chest, threatening to consume her. She felt like she was being torn apart from the inside out. Her legs started to go soft.

Fareeha pulled away, realising Angela had not returned the kiss. Uncertainty entered her gaze as she tried to make sense of the doctor's stoic expression.

"I am sorry. Did I overstep?"

Angela searched her face, looking for an excuse. A fault. Anything to give her reason to step away. To flee. But all she found was a woman, heart laid bare, waiting for her to either break it or make it whole.

"Yes. You did."

A mixture of hurt, shame, and embarrassment swam across her features. Hope dying in her eyes, she lowered her gaze, looking at everything in med bay other than the doctor. Her cheeks started to grow red when Angela grasped her chin, tilting it up so they were face-to-face.

"Do it again."

She could not hold back the smile anymore, not at the sight of Fareeha's eyes widening, taken aback by the sudden turn of events. Angela took the chance to run her fingertips along Fareeha's cheek, bringing one daydream to reality. Soon, hopefully, she would realise every single one of them.

"Doctor's orders," she added.

Fareeha needed no more prodding. She leaned in again, and this time, Angela met her halfway.

Gentle. So gentle, Angela felt like she was going to break. As though she could sense it, Fareeha circled her arms around her waist, holding her together, pulling her close. With one hand on her shoulder, Angela cupped her cheek, deepening the kiss, refusing to part from the other even as they started to pant, making up for the time she wasted trying to distance herself. Sliding her fingers through dark tresses, Angela gave a light tug, receiving a soft moan in response. Heat shot through Angela's body as she pulled Fareeha's head back, exposing her neck. She trailed kisses down the bare column, reaching between her clavicles before replacing lips with tongue, sliding back up under Fareeha's chin, giving a quick nibble.

Then Angela paused, untangling her fingers from Fareeha's hair. The woman looked back at her, moist lips parted, eyes glazed over. Alarms sounded in the doctor's mind when she realised Fareeha was starting to lose consciousness.

"Fareeha!"

At the sound of her name, Fareeha's unfocused gaze snapped to Angela in better clarity. Guilt washed over her when she realised she had forgotten about the concussion. Stupid. *Stupid!*

With a little urging, Angela moved her back into the bed proper, and laid her down gently.

"Are you hurting?"

"Head throbbing," Fareeha replied.

Angela grabbed her scanner again, passing it over Fareeha. She heaved a sigh of relief when it showed nothing had been aggravated.

"I'm sorry, Fareeha," she said, setting the device aside. "I'm so sorry."

"Not your fault. Besides, it was worth it." Fareeha smiled.

Her heart clenched at the sight. Angela leaned down, placing a kiss on her forehead.

"You'll rest here for today so I can keep an eye on you."

"Sounds good." Fareeha already sounded sleepy, but she started to get up again. "One more thing. Could you help me put my clothes back on?"

"Of course," Angela laughed. It did not take long. The top only had one zip, after all.

"Stay with me?" Fareeha asked, laying back down.

Angela took her hand, entwining their fingers. "Always."

Showdown

Chapter Summary

Fareeha and Angela fight. Then they make up. Obviously.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

It was deathly quiet in the passenger compartment, save for the hum of the jet's engines and the click of Mercy's boots as she performed her post-mission examinations. Everyone was unusually well-behaved, answering the doctor's questions promptly and staying still while being scanned. Probably because Mercy looked like a brewing thunderstorm searching for an excuse to let loose. Or because Pharah was sitting at the opposite end of the compartment, glaring at the corner, away from the medic. The frost that had settled between them spread to the others, but Mercy could not find it in herself to care.

Lucio breathed a discreet sigh of relief when Mercy finally moved away from him and onto Soldier 76. The man was the first who dared to look straight up at her as she performed the scan. All the rest had settled for looking down, or at some point past the medic. She felt his brooding gaze settle upon her, but ignored it. Whatever he wanted to say, he could save it for later.

"Any other source of pain?" Mercy asked.

"No."

And that was that. So she moved on to Zarya, who behaved in her usual bold fashion. It would take more than just a teammates' quarrel or a squadron of insurgents to deter this woman. There was not a scratch on her whatsoever. Mercy finished her check with an approving nod, taking a steadying breath before approaching the last team member.

Pharah did not move when she got close, acting as though Mercy was not there. The medical scanner reported nothing serious: just a few bruises, accelerated heart rate and raised blood pressure. She asked a routine question, but received no answer. Anger boiled in her chest. Snapping her device closed, Mercy marched straight into the cockpit where Tracer and Winston were.

"Try not to hit the console, love," Tracer joked, looking back as Mercy sat at the weapons station. "Else we might blow up a tower by accident."

All it took was a quiet glare and Tracer swallowed nervously, focusing back on the controls as she flew the jet back to Gibraltar.

Jack did not let them off without an official reprimand – as official as Overwatch could be in its current state anyway. Fareeha got the bulk of the disapproval for disobeying a direct order and starting an argument with her superior while still in the field. She bore it with a soldier's demeanour: face straight when relegated more menial tasks of helping out around the base, accepting her punishment without complaint.

Angela herself got restricted to base for the next week along with Fareeha, and was assigned with a series of missions to be completed with said woman for the following month. She clenched her jaw at the sentence, noticing her partner stiffen across the table. She avoided Jack's gaze when the team was dismissed, quickly stepping out of the briefing room before anyone could stop her.

Now, six hours after debrief, Angela still felt the burning urge to *punch* something whenever she thought of Fareeha. Maybe even punch her. The woman took off on her own, pursuing her own objective, when 76 ordered a retreat with the rescued civilian hostages. No regard for the team, her own life, not to mention the civilians' should she have jeopardised the mission. She could have *died* because of her own actions.

The door's buzzer sounded, bringing Angela's jagged pacing to a halt. She unclenched her hands, shaking the stiffness out of her shoulders, before opening the door to find Jack standing with his hands behind his back.

"May I come in?" he asked, gruff voice softer than usual.

Angela nodded, stepping aside to let him into her room. Already familiar with the surroundings, Jack made a beeline for his favourite chair near the coffee table, motioning for her to sit on the small couch next to it. She sighed, already dreading the heart-to-heart before it started. But she acceded to Jack's unspoken request anyway and made herself comfortable.

"I hope you understand that I had to punish you as well," he started, leaning forward to rest elbows on knees. "You are technically a superior officer. You had no excuse for causing a scene in front of the team."

"I know."

They fell into silence after that – a usual occurrence when one spoke to Jack nowadays.

"Winston went over the data we mined from the insurgent base before the retreat," he continued. "Turns out they were planning an attack on a military base in Morocco, with the weapons stockpile that Fareeha destroyed."

Angela looked up at Jack, trying to read his expression. Even without his mask on, it was difficult to tell what he was feeling. A stark contrast to the poster boy he used to be.

"Do you approve of what she did?"

"No. More than half the docks were destroyed in the explosion, and there was no guarantee the fires wouldn't spread through the vicinity. But I cannot deny that her actions had at least one good outcome. Thought you might've liked to know that."

Angela nodded stiffly, and Jack sighed as if in defeat. He straightened himself in preparation.

"Truth is, this is not what I came to talk about."

He lapsed into silence again, and Angela felt a nerve beginning to give.

"I know about you and Fareeha."

Gott, as if this day could get any worse.

"Since when?"

"Three weeks ago."

"How did you find out?"

"I saw you in the shooting range."

She relaxed a little. They had not done anything inappropriate in the shooting range...yet. Fareeha developed a knack for ambushing her at unexpected times. While she was working on the Valkyrie suit in the armoury. Developing better healing formulae in the laboratory. Washing off a mission's grime and blood in the showers.

Her heart skipped at the memory, and she sent a silent curse at the woman again. Now she wanted to punch *and* kiss her. Fuck that woman. *Fuck* that woman.

"I suppose you're going to order us to end it." Angela sat straighter in her seat, mirroring Jack's posture. She was ready to challenge his...*request*. No matter her current feelings, she would not let anything rip Fareeha away from her. Not without a fight. She had leverage as the team's only medic. Jack could not...

"No."

That brought her mind to a halt. Keeping a poker face, she examined Jack, looking for some hint of a ruse.

Sensing her disbelief, he explained, "I cannot say I approve of this. Not completely. But...back in the shooting range. You were happy. I can't remember seeing you like that, even back then."

Angela raised a brow. "That is a pretty weak reason, coming from you."

"Is it? We've been in this fight for a long time, Angela." He set a calloused hand on her shoulder. "It's going to get more difficult trying to remember why we even started in the first place. And if Fareeha helps, then..."

Jack shrugged, letting his hand drop. The doctor smiled, recognising that he had reached his limit for mush.

"She does," Angela admitted. "Some days, she is what keeps me going." Her throat tightened unexpectedly.

"I love her."

And there it was. She was struck by how...*concrete* those words were. It had always been a quiet little secret between Fareeha and her. Three words professed and whispered in their moments together. Etched into their skin with fingertips and lips and teeth. But saying it out loud, and to Jack of all people, set the commitment in stone. It anchored her.

The corners of Jack's mouth twitched in an almost-imperceptible smile. "I know."

He stood, stretching his back with an audible *crack*. Then he turned to face her, little traces of mirth gone now.

"But if your relationship affects your conduct again, we're going to have a problem. Understood?"

"I am not an amateur, Jack."

"That is what I'm worried about."

Angela frowned, following Jack as he went to the door. "What do you mean?"

He fixed her with one last inscrutable gaze. "Good night, Angela."

"*Jack*."

Before she could stop him, he strode off into the corridor and turned a corner. Angela sighed, letting the door slide closed again. She would wring an answer out of him next time. For now...

"Athena."

"Yes, Doctor."

"Where is Fareeha?"

"Fareeha Amari is currently not in the base."

Her frown deepened. Violating the terms of her punishment on the very day she received it?

"Then where is she?"

"Unknown. She is out of my scanning range."

Worry gripped her. Angela picked up her phone and called Fareeha, finger lingering just above the name for a prolonged minute. It rang, but there was no answer. She started pacing about her room, before flinging herself onto the bed.

"Athena, alert me the moment you pick up her location."

"Yes, Doctor."

Angela waited at her desk, staring at the computer. Her eyes went to the clock again. 11.18pm. Fareeha should be arriving back at base soon.

According to Athena, Fareeha had returned to base at 11.12pm the previous night, seemingly none the worse for wear. Angela debated looking her up, but decided her feelings were still too volatile. So she had waited until morning, and found herself pushing back the encounter. Hour after hour until the sun had set, and Athena informed her that Fareeha had snuck off base again. Angela considered following her, but had no real way of tracking down her location. So she waited.

"Agent Amari has returned," Athena said suddenly, making her jump.

"Thank you," Angela said, sitting up in her chair. "Show me where she is."

A camera feed blinked onto her computer, showing Fareeha parking her motorcycle in the garage. Angela peered closer. The woman seemed to still be in healthy condition, but she did move a little sluggishly. She watched as Fareeha slung a duffle bag over her shoulder and made her way back to her quarters. Angela bit her lip, closing the feed. Should she go now...?

No. She would wait another hour. For Fareeha to wash up.

Taking a deep breath, Angela pressed the buzzer, pushing down the urge to run back to her own room.

"Who is it?" came Fareeha's voice through the speaker.

She opened her mouth, but no words came.

"Hello?" Fareeha asked again after a few seconds.

Angela swallowed, calming her nerves. "It's me."

Silence. The doctor crossed her arms, taking the time to compose herself. Honestly, she did not know what to say. Would Fareeha still be as angry as the day before? Or had she mellowed out like Angela? God, she never had to do this before. What if Fareeha did not—

The door slid open, revealing Fareeha in a tank top and shorts – her sleepwear. Her black hair was still damp from the shower, towel slung around her neck. Her face was impassive, with a fresh bruise near the cheekbone. Angela frowned at the sight, spotting an older bruise on her lower jaw.

"You're hurt."

"It's nothing."

"How did you get those bruises?"

"It does not matter." It was Fareeha's turn to frown, one hand reaching up to the door controls. "They are not serious. Now, if there's nothing else..."

"We need to talk."

Fareeha stared down at the doctor, before closing her eyes in a sigh, "We do."

Angela followed her into the room proper, eyes roving over each nook and cranny. Everything was still the way she remembered it. Of course it was. It had only been a day. Fareeha's jacket, which she had worn for their date four days ago, was still slung over the reading chair. Her dumbbells sat neatly in the corner, near her wardrobe where Angela had deposited some of her clothes. What she would not give to spend the night here again.

"I was in a boxing match. There is a ring in town that organises weekly fights."

Fareeha hung her towel to dry, before turning back to Angela.

"I didn't know you knew how to box."

"I don't, apparently." Her hand worried at the fresh bruise, then dropped to her side.

"I'm sorry for my behaviour during the mission," Fareeha said, clasping her hands behind her back, shoulders straight. "I shouldn't have gone off by myself. And I disrespected you in front of the team. It won't happen again."

Feeling the corners of her mouth twitch, Angela stepped forward, grabbing onto Fareeha's elbows.

"First of all, you're not speaking to a superior." She pulled Fareeha's arms forward, forcing her to relax. "So you can save the soldier act for Jack." Angela's hands paused at Fareeha's wrists before slipping further down, feeling warm hands close over hers. She returned the hold, wishing she never had to let go.

"I'm not here to give you another reprimand. You've already had enough during debrief."

Fareeha nodded. Her attention never wavered, hanging on Angela's every word.

"And...I'm sorry as well. For losing my temper at you like that." She paused, taken aback when Fareeha laughed. The sight drew a smile to her face, even though she was not entirely sure what...

"You know," Fareeha managed after her laughter subsided. "You actually kind of scared me back there."

"I...did?"

"Yeah. You looked like you were ready to euthanise me on the spot." She pulled Angela close, wrapping an arm around her waist.

"I would never do that," Angela said. She rested her arms around her lover's neck, closing her eyes when Fareeha touched their foreheads together. "I just thought..." She swallowed, clearing the lump in her throat. "I thought I was going to lose you."

"Me too," Fareeha whispered.

Gathering herself, Angela pulled her lips into a smile, looking back up. "This is usually where the heroine kisses the love of her life and promises not to do anything stupid again."

Fareeha raised a brow. "*Love of her life*? I'm only sleeping with you to get better medical care. *Ah!*" She winced at Angela's pinch on her shoulder.

"Just so you know, Amari. Sometimes 'mercy' involves euthanasia."

God, Angela loved her smile. And her kisses. And her arms. Pulling her flush against Fareeha's hard, muscled body. A hint of arousal flickered in the pit of her stomach as firm hands moved lower down her body.

"Any plans for tonight, Doctor?" Fareeha murmured.

"Does staying in your room count?"

Their eyes never left each other even as Fareeha swept her off the ground easily, stepping sure-footed towards the bed. As sure-footed she could be while Angela showered her with kisses. They reached the bed without incident, where Fareeha set her down gently.

Angela felt her patience wearing thin, muted fire burning higher as Fareeha climbed in after her, running one hand slowly up under her t-shirt. She wanted to relish this moment, Angela knew. To make up for a day's worth of separation and yearning. And she would let her. Take her time to caress every inch of Angela's body. Wring every manner of cry and moan from her throat. Coat her tongue with the intoxicating essence of pleasure. Then. *Then*.

Fareeha would receive her true punishment.

Chapter End Notes

50 Shades of Mercy, anyone?

It's now 3 days since I've been writing fan fiction instead of playing the actual goddamn game. Thanks, Pharmarcy.

Takeoff

Chapter Summary

Pharah's first mission with Overwatch.

Running a sharp eye down the caduceus staff, Angela turned it over in her hands for one last check before the mission started. In another skirmish three days ago, she got caught in a surprise melee attack, which ended with the staff being broken into three pieces. Watching one of her masterworks shatter before her very eyes was akin to witnessing an act of atrocity – which was repaid with three bullets to the chest. She did not relish the minor victory, already mourning the ruined staff and planning its resurrection.

She pressed the two triggers on its side, igniting its tip with a tranquil gold and electric blue glow respectively. Humming in approval, Angela hefted it, enjoying its comforting weight between her hands. Then she twirled it around her body, throwing it up into the air and snatching it back smoothly.

"Nice one."

Angela almost dropped the staff in surprise, turning on her heel to find Fareeha entering the weaponry. She was suited up as well, moving fluidly in the Raptora armour, helmet tucked under one arm. Getting a little self-conscious under the woman's gaze and smile, Angela set the staff back onto its stand.

"Thank you."

She watched Fareeha cock her head in response, making her way over to her personal locker. The soldier tapped in a code rapidly, and the lid opened to reveal her rocket launcher, gleaming a polished sheen. She lifted it with practiced ease, performing what should be her routine pre-mission checks.

"How have you been?" Angela said, moving closer. "I hope everyone's been treating you well."

Fareeha arrived just the day after her staff's demise. Angela never laid eyes on her again after the physical examination, having been cooped up in her office despite Lena and Winston's best efforts to lure her out. She even missed the briefing for this mission, relying instead on Athena's recording to get caught up on the details.

"Oh, they are very accommodating. I am still getting to know my way around the base, but other than that, I'm doing well."

Fareeha shot her another smile, and Angela was still struck by how much she resembled Ana. When she first walked into the med bay, it was as though a ghost from the past had chosen to pay a visit. Fareeha's skin was a few shades darker than her mother's, shoulders a little broader, body more well-built. But her face... Should her tattoo be under the left eye instead, it would be easy to mistake her for Ana. Much too easy.

But Angela had been fully absorbed in her work then. Looking at her now, up-close... She started to see the difference. Ana was passionate. She *burned* with righteous fury, a brilliant figure many

admired from afar, but few dared to approach – a sentiment Angela shared herself. During the few close encounters she had with Ana, she experienced the aura that shrouded the woman. One either had enough steel in their spine to follow in her footsteps, or faltered and was swept aside. Angela had been one of those left on the sides - or at least she thought so, until Ana herself requested for Angela's transfer to her unit as a field medic. Rejecting that request was one of the hardest things Angela had ever done – she did it face-to-face out of courtesy – but it did help accelerate her rise through Overwatch's ranks.

She never forgot about it. And now, she would finally get a taste of fighting beside an Amari. Although, something told her it would be different. Fareeha was...softer. Her edges less cutting, presence quieter than her mother's. There was no question she was as powerful as Ana had been, though. Angela sensed it, back in the med bay. It was time to see her in action.

"Glad to hear that," Angela replied.

"Although, I was not expecting to find a child in Overwatch's ranks," Fareeha continued, lifting her eyes from the weapon.

Angela laughed, "Oh, I'd hardly call Hana a child. No matter how much she insists on acting like one."

"Still. She is young."

Another difference. Angela was rather young herself when she first joined Overwatch. Where Fareeha expressed concern, Ana set expectations. She took one look at Angela, and told her what she could and *should* achieve. Age did not matter. It was the *spirit* that counted. Angela wondered if that was how Fareeha was brought up; target after target set in front of her, waiting to be met or shattered.

"Yes, but she has the ability and potential. She'll be able to do as much good here as in the military. More, perhaps."

It was minute, but Angela noticed the tension creep into Fareeha's features before she nodded, looking back down at her weapon.

Most probably raised that way.

Realising that she had touched a nerve, Angela stepped back, letting the silence settle over them. She occupied herself with the staff again, ears acutely aware of Fareeha's armoured fingers clicking against the rocket launcher. There was an almost steady rhythm to it, no doubt born of countless repetition.

"Doctor?"

She jerked her gaze up to where Fareeha stood facing her.

"Angela, please."

"Angela," the soldier acquiesced, smile on her lips. "May I ask you a question?"

"Of course."

"I've always wanted to know," Fareeha started, hand gesturing over her own head, drawing an imaginary half-circle. Was that...a blush on her cheeks? "Does your halo have any practical function?"

"Oh." Angela's hand reached up to touch the headgear, becoming self-conscious again. She had worn this suit so many times, she no longer gave the halo a second thought. "No, actually. It's just there to complete the image." The doctor found herself fighting against a similar blush threatening to rise.

"I've been told that it's a bit much, sometimes."

"Really? I think it suits you."

The blush broke through, flooding her cheeks with warmth. Immensely grateful that Fareeha chose that moment to turn away, Angela spun towards the wall, thrown by how much the compliment affected her. She touched the back of her hand against her cheek, feeling the heat radiate from beneath her skin. The way those words lilted off the tip of Fareeha's tongue – it seemed so easy and sincere, it caught her off-guard. Yes, that's right. Her defenses were down. That was why it affected her so.

Angela turned her head – just a little – to watch Fareeha out of the corner of her eye. A frown was etched between her brows as she fiddled with something inside her helmet. She should get to know the woman better, after this mission was over.

Heavy thuds sounded from the corridor, accompanied by a messy blend of accents and the occasional laughter. It did not take long before Reinhardt stomped in, fitted out with his bulky armour, followed by Lena, Zarya, and Genji.

"Ah! You can always count on an Amari to be early!" Reinhardt boomed the moment he saw Fareeha. He practically charged over to her side, slamming his huge hand onto her shoulder. Angela hissed quietly, half-expecting Fareeha's shoulder to dislocate. To the soldier's credit, she bore it with a smile. And clenched teeth.

"I wanted to make a good impression," Fareeha managed, face still stiff.

"Oh my dear!" he laughed. "You impressed me the moment you stepped into my sight." He brought his hand down for another pat. But this time, Angela noticed he paused a little before making contact, as though suddenly remembering his own strength.

"Your mother would be proud of you," he said, softer and more comforting, before drawing his hand back and tramping over to Zarya, challenging her to some sort of bet.

The bright, enraptured glint in Fareeha's eyes faded when Reinhardt moved away. Her smile vanished a little too quickly and she turned, robbing Angela's view of her face. Her heart squeezed when she noticed Fareeha's shoulders rise, fall, then straighten. Just like Ana's did when Angela asked after her daughter's well-being.

She caught the train of thought. It was doing Fareeha a disfavoured, all these comparisons to her predecessor. She should be judged on her own merits, not the legacy of the late Ana Amari.

At the announcement of the impending landing, Fareeha put on her helmet, visor snapping down in place to cover half of her face. She looked back, meeting Angela's eyes, and gave her a small smile. Angela nodded, joining the squad near the sealed ramp as the VTOL shook, its rotors aligning for a vertical landing.

She snuck a glance at the bulkhead's polished metal, eyes lingering on the golden halo of her reflection, before following behind her bellowing and whooping comrades as they charged down the ramp.

The Valkyrie's wings had always been a point of pride for Mercy. During its conception, she had been thrown schematic after schematic of bulky military thrusters for integration into the suit. A lot of pressure – not to mention resentment – was loaded onto her shoulders each time she rejected those...*uncouth* designs. After throwing many prototype sketches into the bin, she eventually enlisted the help of Torbjörn, who adapted the thrusters into a sleeker design. At her bidding, they took inspiration from Vishkar's hard-light technology to engineer extendable wings, for better aerodynamics. Power was sacrificed for flexibility in the field, a design choice Mercy never questioned. Until now.

She watched as Pharah rocketed into the air for the fourth time – *why was she even keeping count* – and could not help but feel impotent with her wings. The battlefield was her playground, so to speak. She could glide from one end to the other, turn the tide where the battle was lost, push her comrades forward where they should have been dead.

"Rocket barrage, incoming!"

But Pharah. Pharah ruled both the skies *and* the ground. She was the queen on the board, able to move in any direction, attack any point she wanted with freedom granted by her powerful wings. They were thrusters, Mercy knew, much more improved and refined than what she had to work with years ago. But on Pharah they might as well have been the fiery wings of a mighty bird of prey.

Said bird landed on ground again, jump jets refilling rapidly with fuel, getting ready for her next flight. The need to soar with her gripped Mercy in an unforgiving, adrenaline-charged hold. She would not be able to reach Pharah's heights, but she could amplify the magnitude of her rockets. It would create more chaos among the enemy ranks and give her team room to slip the payload through.

She activated the small holo-device on her wrist, eyes sweeping over the team's status, all of which blinked a healthy green. *Good*. Excitement surged through her being as she returned her focus to Pharah. The soldier bent her legs slightly like she always did before take-off, and Mercy prepared her thrusters. She activated the damage boost just as Pharah soared upwards, bird-like helmet turning back to look at the medic flying after her. The soldier did not waste any time: she levelled her launcher, dispensing rockets with deadly accuracy.

"Nice one! Keep it up, loves, we're almost there!" Tracer yelled through the comm link. Reinhardt's laugh could be heard in the explosion-filled background.

This could be one of their smoothest missions yet. Mercy trailed behind Pharah as they landed, the soldier taking the chance to reload her weapon. They shared another glance and at Mercy's eager nod, the pair shot up into the skies again.

She would never get sick of this. Hovering high above the ground, with a superior vantage point of the area, Mercy could watch everything unfold before her eyes. The Overwatch squad trailing beside the payload, Reinhardt's shield lighting up whenever the enemy pushed forward, Zarya deploying barriers and lobbing charges. Blue streaks marking Tracer's mad, dizzying paths as she struck from every angle possible. The occasional green flash when Genji sliced through his targets with ease. Pharah's rockets falling well away from her teammates, taking care of stragglers trying to return to their squads. She saw the carnage and bloodshed they left behind as well, but pushed that to the back of her mind. It was a necessary evil. Something to worry about later.

"Pharah! Mercy!" Genji's urgent voice came clear through the comm. *"Snipers are heading up to your position! Recommend-"*

The sharp crack of metal behind her back told her it was too late. At the corner of her vision,

Mercy saw the broken piece of Valkyrie wing arc towards the ground, scattering bits of expensive circuitry and alloy in its wake. Time slowed down as she realised the thrusters were not working. Her hand stretched out towards Pharah, who was becoming smaller by the second. The soldier turned, mouth parting, yelling something that could not penetrate the pounding in Mercy's ears. She watched the blue figure angle herself downwards, matching Mercy's trajectory as she plummeted towards hard concrete. As Pharah activated her thrusters in a mad descent, Mercy became aware of how...hollow her body felt. Like everything under her skin had disappeared, leaving but the shadow of person in her place. Then, breathlessness. Panic. *Nonono it's not time I cannot—*

A sudden jerk. Then a pirouette left her disoriented, realising belatedly that she was clutching onto warm blue armour for dear life. A firm hand held the back of her head, rocket-heated arm locked around her waist, as they landed gently back on their feet. She felt controlled pants on the side of her neck, the edge of a yellow visor pressing on her ear, before Pharah let her down carefully. As relief softened her grip on Pharah's shoulders, Mercy let her hands trail down the armour, looking up into dark brown eyes.

"Are you alright?" she asked, worry written across her face, piercing Mercy to the core.

She nodded mutely, unable to tear her eyes away. Safe. She was safe.

"Mercy? What is your status?"

Genji jolted her out of her trance. She looked down, suddenly aware they still stood chest-to-chest, and took a shaky step backward.

"I—I'm fine," Mercy replied. "The snipers?"

"Taken care of. What of the payload?" He switched to the team channel.

"Secured," Reinhardt replied with nary a trace of exertion. *"Make your way back here before more of our friends show up."*

"Understood."

With that, a click ended the exchange. Mercy let out a breath she did not remember holding, before realising that her hands were *empty*. She spun on her heel, casting frantic eyes all across the wide street for her staff. It had *just* been repaired – it could not disappear on her now.

"Looking for this?"

Pharah held out the caduceus staff – *undamaged, thank god* – in one hand, bringing a smile to Mercy's face.

"Yes!" She took it in both hands, its weight making her complete again. Did Pharah catch it while they were falling?

"Thank you."

"No problem." The soldier rested her launcher on a shoulder, free hand gesturing towards their extraction point. "Shall we?"

Angela sniffed, wrapping sweater-covered arms around herself as she strolled down the corridor. In a rare decision to put pleasure before business, Angela chose not to start repairs on her Valkyrie suit that night. Instead, she made her way down to the mess hall – which was just a spacious

kitchen-cum-dining room, really – where her squad was no doubt celebrating by getting plastered. She shivered, tightening her arms and regretting her choice of shorts. Winston really needed to get the heater working again.

A yawn escaped her lips as she rounded a corner – almost running straight into Fareeha. The woman held both hands up, as though to grab her in case she fell, and froze in place. Angela chuckled.

"Relax," she said, nodding towards the kitchen right down the corridor. "Don't tell me the drinking's already ended?"

Fareeha seemed to hesitate, her eyes darting away from Angela for a second. Curious.

"No. I'm just...heading back to my room," she said slowly. "It's getting a little rowdy in there."

Angela raised a brow. She would have expected the ex-military woman to be used to drunken post-mission parties. But then again, that was just a generalisation. Jack never really got into those kinds of festivities either. And she did not know Fareeha all that well, admittedly.

"Are you going to join them?" Fareeha asked.

"Well, I was...but," Angela chewed her lip, an idea forming in her mind. "Would you like to join me instead? I could get some snacks and we can go to my room. At least the heater's still working in there." As if on cue, she shivered a little. She must be losing her natural tolerance for cold, after spending the past few years in a temperate climate.

Fareeha scratched at the back of her neck. "Wouldn't you like to join the rest?"

"Oh my friend," Angela said, shaking her head in amusement. "Take my advice. When Reinhardt and Aleksandra start drinking together, run. You don't want to be the one to clean up afterwards."

She bit back a smile when Fareeha reached for another piece of chocolate.

"I didn't expect that you'd have a sweet tooth," Angela said, sipping on her tea.

"It is a weakness," Fareeha admitted, tossing the piece into her mouth. "My Helix squad would bribe me with a couple of bars whenever they need a favour."

Angela laughed, "Really? And it works?"

The soldier swallowed, eyes widening. "Some of the time?" The way she drawled her words told Angela that *'some'* meant *'most'*.

"Please don't use it against me."

"I'll try not to. But no promises."

"And don't tell the others."

"Don't worry. Doctor-patient confidentiality." Angela winked, noticing the shade of red creeping onto the woman's cheeks.

Fareeha looked down, and before long, her gaze drifted towards the chocolate again. She grinned, leaning forward to take the packet, and tossed it into Fareeha's hands.

"Finish them. You can afford it."

"Thanks," she said sheepishly. Her hand reached into the packet nevertheless.

"So, how are you feeling?" Angela asked. "Now that you've had your first mission with us. Will you be staying longer?"

Fareeha remained silent for a while, chewing on both her chocolate and answer. She had taken a leave of absence from Helix in order to join Overwatch. Or at least, get a taste of the organisation before deciding to join. It would not be easy, Angela knew. She had a squad that she cared about. Choosing to leave would be like leaving a family. That they were not allowed to keep in contact with anyone outside of Overwatch just made the decision all the more difficult.

"It has been to my expectations," she finally replied. "I'm still thrilled, actually. Joining Overwatch has always been a dream of mine."

"I heard. Ana told me you had posters of us all over your room," Angela said. "Your mother always did want you to follow in her footsteps."

"She did? Funny, she never told me." Fareeha's reply was dry, and Angela regretted her words.

"I'm sorry. I shouldn't have brought her up."

"It's alright," Fareeha sighed. "I'm getting used to it. Reinhardt's been talking non-stop about the 'good old days'."

"I'll get him to stop, if you like."

"No, no! It's fine. He seems to enjoy telling me about my mother, anyway. Just let him be." Fareeha shrugged, popping another bite of chocolate.

"It is just odd, you know?" she said suddenly, breaking the silence before it could settle in. "Hearing so much about her from so many different people. It seems—" Fareeha stopped as abruptly as she had started.

"Yes?"

"It seems she's made quite an impact here," she finished.

If her tight-lipped smile was any indication, Angela suspected that was not what she wanted to say. But she let it drop. Fareeha would open up at her own time.

"She has. And I think you would too."

Fareeha held her gaze for a moment before tilting her head in acknowledgement. Then she dug for the last remaining chocolate, tossing it into her mouth, and rose from the chair.

"It's getting late, and I've taken up enough of your time." Fareeha shook the empty chocolate package in her hand. "Thanks for the snack."

Angela raised a brow, escorting Fareeha to the door. "Were you only staying for the chocolate?"

"Maybe," the soldier replied, smirk on her lips.

"Horrible person." Angela tapped on the controls, the door sliding open in response.

"If anything I've heard from the others is true, you are one too," Fareeha riposted, smirk growing into a grin.

"Well then, you'd have to stay to find out, won't you?" Angela paused as Fareeha stepped out into the hallway.

"Fareeha."

"Yes?" The woman turned towards her, hands moving to rest behind her back.

"The decision is entirely up to you, but... I would really like you to stay." Angela shifted her weight, leaning against the door frame. The air left her lungs as though she had just confessed a secret. "I think you'd make a great addition to the team."

"Will you have more chocolate for me if I stay?"

"I'm Swiss, my dear. I always have chocolate."

Fareeha nodded, smile never leaving her face. "A compelling incentive. I'll think it over, Doctor."

"Angela."

"Angela," she corrected herself without missing a beat. "Good night."

"Good night, Fareeha."

She watched the woman stroll away, before retreating back into the dimmer lighting of her room.

"Athena."

"Yes?"

"Where are the best chocolatiers in town?"

Dream

Chapter Summary

Fareeha has a troubled sleep.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

One thing for certain, Fareeha preferred night to day while in the Raptora armour. She grew up under the harsh brilliance of the Giza sun and loved it, make no mistake. It watched over her when she fell and scraped her knees, got involved in a street brawl after her friend's honour was insulted. When she bid goodbye to her mother, hands gripping her jacket leathers, wondering how many months would pass before she would return again. In a way, the sun was her guardian. But in the Raptora, it would become the source of a sweltering, sweaty hell that left her suit drenched, and the armour in need of a good clean.

The moon was currently providing a merciful reprieve, making it much more comfortable in the Raptora. That did not stop Saleh from bellyaching though.

"Would it kill to install better ventilation in our armour? I mean, they do know we're shooting rockets out of these things, right?" His voice came through clear and crisp, as though he was standing right next to her. At least they knew their radios were still working.

"You could put in the suggestion. Again," Tariq deadpanned. *"So the eggheads can ignore it. Again."*

"Kids," Fareeha cut in. "Focus. Status report."

"All clear, Captain," Saleh said promptly, followed by Tariq, his patrol partner.

"Nothing in sight," Akila followed up. She was a recent transfer to her squad, along with Eshe, in light of their recent losses. Fareeha was impressed with both women so far. Tough and resolute, people she would trust to watch her back.

It was a little piece of comfort for the mission they were on. Helix had given them a rare assignment outside the Anubis facility, breaking the monotony that was starting to set in. They were to watch over the construction of a secret military research facility on the edges of Aswan, in its last stretch towards completion. The past month had been relatively uneventful. A few spies trying to enter the facility, small attacks at vulnerable corners. Nothing they could not handle, and it was good exercise for the team to get used to one another. Fareeha found herself liking this assignment, spending her time at a secret base. It was kind of like being in Gibraltar.

She stopped in her tracks, the word *Gibraltar* echoing emptily in her head. It held no meaning for her. Was it a...place? A name? Fareeha frowned under her visor, turning sharply to look behind her shoulder, expecting to find a white figure framed by wings and a halo. Her heart skipped a beat at a ghost she did not see, bewilderment growing by the second. Wait. She was not supposed to be here. Fareeha spun again, looking around at the facility, familiar surroundings suddenly feeling foreign.

What...what am I doing here?

"Captain!" Saleh's voice distracted her from the growing panic. *"Eshe hasn't reported in."*

In an instant, the disorientation fell away. Her mind snapped back into focus, as though the mental lapse never happened.

"Eshe, report. What's your status?" Fareeha brought up Eshe's vitals on her helmet display, only to find it was not available.

Shit.

"I'm heading to her position. Saleh, cover the north entrance."

"Affirmative."

With the jump jet's help, Fareeha was able to clear the distance within a few seconds. She tried to identify her silent squadmate's location from the air. Nothing. Not even the IFF could tell her where Eshe was. Mind on high alert, Fareeha landed, immediately beginning a sweep of the area. It did not take long for her to spot the anomaly – a bunker entrance was open, spilling artificial lighting into the dark of night. Moving cautiously, Fareeha could just make out a bulky figure crumpled on the ground, right inside the door.

Eshe. Despite every ingrained bit of training, Fareeha threw caution to the wind and sprinted towards her fallen teammate. She stepped through the door, calling a name which fell away from her lips. Where the bunker once was, her old room stood in its place. She looked down at her hands, where a rocket launcher no longer rested, taken aback by how smooth and soft her skin was. There was no longer a weight hugging tightly at her body, replaced instead with the lightness of a pair of cotton shorts and snug t-shirt.

Fareeha lifted her eyes, feasting on the view of her spacious room, back in their home in Giza. Sunlight streamed in from open windows, covering the room in a golden glow. Her bed was in the corner, neatly made, fitting in with the rest of her tidy room. It was an iron-clad rule in the Amari household: nothing should be out of place. The only spot in her room that came close to being messy was the wall next to the window, which was covered with posters of Overwatch. There was one of Reinhardt, striking the heroic pose of a guardian. More than a few had Morrison in the foreground. Ana Amari took up the back, in true sniper faction, wielding the Overwatch flag or her sniper rifle. Pride welled up in Fareeha's chest. She would be like her mother one day. A hero.

"Fareeha."

Ana's dulcet tone reached her ears, invoking a sense of longing. She became aware of her mother standing in front of the posters, arms crossed, back facing her.

"Ami. What are you doing here?"

Muted surprise at how young she sounded. That did not stop her from moving forward, to stand by her mother's side.

"Just paying you a visit, little one." Ana turned to give her a smile. "It's been a long time since we've seen each other."

"But aren't you busy?" Fareeha asked, looking up at the posters. "The world always needs its heroes, doesn't it?"

Where did the resentment come from? It was sharp. Acidic. Eating her from the inside, but also

distant. Trying to pull away from where it did not belong.

Fareeha felt Ana's eyes on her, but the burn of teenage rebellion forbade her from returning the gaze. She focused on the posters instead, eyes moving from face to inexplicably familiar face, until she landed on the angel.

The angel?

Murky memories of a military facility bubbled to the surface. Confusion. Strain. Anticipation. Exhilaration. A secret base, her life's dream, heroes undercover. Under covers, soft lips hot against hers, mouth, neck, chest. Hunger. Passion. Love.

"Mercy." The word – no, *name* – rolled off her tongue unbidden. Effortless. She had said it many times before. When?

"Mercy. She saved a lot of lives. More than I ever could."

The praise was ice cold on Ana's lips. Fareeha turned towards her mother, defense ready to burst from her throat. A warm touch on her cheek pushed it down, thumb tracing her tattoo softly. Ana's expression was unreadable as she regarded her daughter, now grown, strong, and independent.

"Too bad she didn't save me."

Something warm, thick, splattered across her face. She did not flinch. Eyes locked with Ana's, before sliding down to the perfect hole in the middle of her chest. Red seeped out of the wound, staining the dark fabric of Ana's shirt, claiming territory. Then she moved her gaze further down, looking at her own chest, where the bullet had burrowed right above her heart. There was no pain. Just a soft weight pressing down, like it belonged.

She lifted her head, looking past her mother, and saw the masked assassin through the narrow angle of the window. She could do nothing except feel the coldness of Ana's hand trailing down to her shoulder. Lifeless. As Ana fell into Fareeha's arms, the rifle muzzle leveled at her and she knew.

It was over.

Fareeha jerked upwards, the echoing report of a rifle still ringing in her ears. She stared up at the nondescript grey ceiling, as reality seeped back into her being. Then she became aware of a warm weight pressing on her body, looking down to find a mess of blonde hair resting under her chin.

Angela. She must have come in after Fareeha fell asleep on the couch. The blonde had adopted a habit of crawling into her bed at random hours of the night, one that Fareeha needed time to adjust to in the beginning. The first time she awoke to find a strange presence in her bed, her combat reflexes kicked in. Literally. Angela's search for bedtime warmth was rewarded with a bruise on her hip and a cut on her forehead from the bedside table. Fareeha had apologised, kissed, hugged the dazed and hurt woman profusely, even became her lab assistant for the next few days. But it took Angela two whole weeks before she dared to try again.

She was glad Angela did, though. Now it was one of the best comforts she enjoyed, feeling her lover's warmth as she fell asleep, and when she awoke.

Fareeha wrapped her arms around Angela as she stirred, woken by Fareeha's spasm. Dark fingers ran softly through blonde locks, languid caresses eliciting a note of satisfaction from Angela's throat.

"Bad dream?" Angela mumbled against her chest, words slurring into each other. She shifted, grasping blindly for the blanket she had draped over them, pulling it tighter around her shoulders and Fareeha.

"It's nothing," Fareeha murmured softly, never breaking the motion through Angela's hair.

"Mm." Wrapping both legs around one of Fareeha's, Angela pressed the side of her head closer against Fareeha's chest.

"You're going to have a heart attack soon if you don't relax," the doctor said, sounding sharper. "Want to talk about it?"

Fareeha remained silent, taking deep breaths to calm herself as ordered.

"No, it's alright," she said, bending down to kiss the top of Angela's head. "Go back to sleep."

Sleep would not come easy for her again, though. Fareeha's mind was now fully-awake, crisp at the edges and ready to work. So she let it. Holding onto the dream was difficult, bits and pieces becoming fuzzier the more she tried to remember. There was a part where she was back with Helix. It was more of a memory, to be honest. Despite the fact that she never had an assignment in Aswan – which she dismissed as her brain's dream antics – it was pretty accurate. They had been assigned to a secret military base, and she lost a squadmate near the end. Eshe had lain exactly where she did in the dream, where Fareeha ran towards, only to find...her home.

Her old home. Back in Giza where she lived with her mother, and an aunt just across the street. She could not remember each and every detail of the house anymore. Just the ones that she held close to her heart. The plane models in her room's display case that she would play with, wishing she could fly through the skies whenever she wanted. The old, worn couch in the living room where she would crash in after a long day at school and watch television from. The wooden stairs she loved running up and down as a child, until one day she tripped and fell to the bottom. Ana's hands wiping away her tears after, as she chided Fareeha for not listening to her mother's warnings, but still pulling her close, holding her until the sobs subsided.

The sense of loss intensified when the memory was ripped away, replaced by that of her dream. Ana standing before her with a bullet wound in her chest, the touch on Fareeha's cheek growing colder as she slipped away.

"Just paying you a visit, little one."

If it really was her, then she chose a horrible dream for a visit. Fareeha tried to replace Ana's dying image with a more pleasant one. But all she could bring up was Ana's distant, angry expressions, from when their relationship hit the rocks. She closed her eyes, throat tightening with regret, feeling like such *a piece of shit*. Fareeha could not even remember when or how the argument started. Only the residual feeling of abandonment and wilful pride, that forbade the extension of any olive branches. It all seemed so petty now. Resenting her mother for not being with her, for having good reason to not be with her, for making her look *selfish*.

"You know I have to be there, Fareeha. There are—"

"Go. The world needs you more."

She did not send Ana off that day. God. Selfish. So selfish.

"Mmph. You're cutting off my air, *Bärchen*."

Fareeha's eyes snapped open and, realising she was indeed clamping onto the smaller woman,

eased her tight hold. Angela shifted again, this time lifting herself up from Fareeha's body. She felt the press of Angela's chest against hers, as she rested both elbows on the couch beneath.

"Lights, warm. Forty percent."

A soft, yellow glow illuminated the bedroom. Angela gazed down drowsily, fingers dabbing at the corner of her lover's eyes.

"Thought your breathing's a little off," she said, wiping off tears Fareeha did not know were there. "What's wrong?"

Fareeha sighed, slipping her hand through Angela's.

"It's nothing," she replied. "And what was that you called me?"

"Bear. I thought I was being strangled by one." Angela smiled, placing a soft kiss on her lips. "Now, don't change the subject. What's wrong?"

"It's nothing. Just a...bad dream."

"About?"

"A mission I had with Helix. And—," Fareeha considered not giving the full picture. But if the raised brow was any indication, Angela was onto her.

"And then I saw my mother."

"Ah. What was it this time?"

"We were back in our home in Giza. In my room."

"Then something happened."

"She got shot by a sniper. In front of me," Fareeha said flatly. Talking through it helped to chase remnants of the dream away, she found. Another perk of having the doctor close.

"I'm sorry."

The morose look on Angela's face drew a sudden, unexpected swell of amusement in Fareeha. It must have shown on her face, because the doctor's brows furrowed into a frown.

"Are you alright?" Angela asked, not comprehending Fareeha's smile. Or the shaking of her shoulders. "Do you need a brain scan or..."

Fareeha swallowed her silent laughs and propped herself up, stealing a kiss.

"No. It's just that you're so *serious*," she said. "Look. I had a dream. It was bad. But it's not real, and I'm already getting over it. So stop worrying, okay?"

Angela stared at her, features schooling into a doctor's poker face.

Yup. She's not buying it. Just as well. Fareeha did not either.

"You're unbelievable," Angela said finally. She let her head fall, burrowing back under Fareeha's chin as the soldier laid down in relief.

Fareeha reached for the blanket and pulled it up, wrapping themselves in a warm cocoon. She ran

her fingers through blonde hair, placing one last kiss on Angela's head.

"I know you mean well, *albi*, but I'm just not ready to talk about her. One day, but not today."

Light tickling on her chin as Angela shifted her head. "I'm shivering with anticipation."

"Now who's unbelievable?"

"You're still the reigning champion," came Angela's muffled reply.

Fareeha chuckled. "Good to know. Lights, off."

The room was plunged into darkness once more, with a hint of moonlight trickling in from the window. She could already tell sleep would not come. It was fine. Fareeha was more than used to short, sleepless nights. At least she had company this time.

Fingers tracing circular patterns on Angela's bicep, Fareeha's gaze wandered aimlessly around the ceiling, before it finally fell on the wooden falcon statuette on her study table. It was a beautiful little thing: wings spread in mid-flight, fierce eyes locked on an invisible prey, sharp talons ready for the kill. A farewell gift from her Helix squad; Saleh said it reminded them of her. Now it served to remind her of them. Fareeha missed the squad. She wondered how they were doing. Were they still assigned to the Anubis facility? Who was their leader now, and that person had better treat them well, *or else*.

She released the pent-up questions in a forceful exhale, then kept deathly still. Only when Angela did not stir, did she relax. The doctor not only woke quickly, but fell asleep equally fast as well. A few times Fareeha had gone unfulfilled when Angela passed out the moment her head hit the pillows.

If only she had Angela's gift. Deciding to try and court sleep again, Fareeha closed her eyes, hand moving down to drape over Angela's stomach in a loose hold. She cleared her mind, matching Angela's slow and steady breathing, falling into a comfortable rhythm. And eventually, a dreamless sleep.

Chapter End Notes

"albi/kalbi" = my heart (Arabic) - I got this from Google, so do tell me if I've been played. Seriously.

Been reading Sombra/Ana Amari theories, then this happened. Blizzard, please give us more Ana Amari so I can worship two generations of Amari goddesses.

Love, Song

Chapter Summary

Hana deals with a trouble of the heart. Angela tries to help.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

It was not uncommon to find the kitchen lights on after midnight. Some of the gathered agents were late sleepers, and would be damned if they hit the sack before 2am. Some had a tendency to ponder deep thoughts in the dark of night, especially after a mission, and needed a warm mug of comfort before resting. Some just had screwed up sleep cycles and liked to munch on something before they wrestled sleep into submission.

Angela fell into the last category. But Hana fit into none. The girl was content to stay in her room, working out her frustrations and hang-ups by killing countless virtual enemies, and yelling the occasional cuss word that echoed down the corridor. She had a vivacious and perky personality, but preferred to keep to herself regarding more personal matters. That was why Angela was surprised to find Hana sitting at the dining table alone, working her way through a small tub of ice cream without the usual energy she buzzed with.

"No games tonight?" Angela asked, tossing an affectionate smile at the girl, who looked up with the spoon still in her mouth.

"Don't feel like it," Hana replied through the ice cream.

"Hm. Are you feeling alright?" she teased, fishing a teabag from the open box on the counter. "Hana Song, professional and devoted gamer, doesn't feel like playing a game?"

Hana groaned loudly before shoving another spoonful of ice cream into her mouth. Angela quickly poured the hot water for her chamomile tea and made her way over to the table. Up close, the girl did look rather depressed. Her mouth was downturned even while she devoured a favourite dessert.

"What's wrong, my dear?" Angela sat beside the girl. "You look down."

"It's nothing," she mumbled.

Angela snorted involuntarily. "You sound like Fareeha. *'It's nothing'*," she imitated the Egyptian's accent as best she could. It was a failure, obviously. She was not very good at impressions. But it did put a small smile on Hana's face, so that was a plus.

"She would say *'it's nothing'* even when all her ribs have pierced through her lungs."

"Seriously?"

"Well, she did say that once when her shin bone was sticking out of her leg." Angela shrugged, despite revisiting the memory. They had been on an undercover mission, armed with only concealed weapons. It took all of Angela's might to hold the woman down before she sprinted

after the target on the damaged leg.

"Ugh. Gross."

"I know." Angela took a sip of her tea as Hana returned to her ice cream. A glance at the tub said it was banana flavour with chocolate chunks. She hoped for the girl's sake that it was not Winston's.

"Want some?" Hana noticed her eyes lingering on the tub, and pushed it towards her.

"No, thank you." Angela pushed it back, before throwing her arm around the girl. "So, you haven't told me. What is this '*nothing*' that's bothering you so?"

Black eyes flitted towards her, then dropped back down. She could feel Hana's shoulders tense as she squirmed in her seat. Her foot tapped out a short nervous rhythm on the floor before she took a deep breath, straightening her back. Hana shifted on her chair so that she faced Angela proper, fixing the doctor with a scrutinising stare. Her cheeks, which were turning more sun-kissed from all the time spent on missions, started to redden.

"Do you love Fareeha?"

That took her by surprise. Angela narrowed her eyes, trying to fathom Hana's intent.

"What?"

"Not a difficult question," Hana said. "Unless you don't..."

"No!" Surprised at her sudden outburst, Angela took a breath.

"I mean, no. It's not true that I don't. I do. I love her very much."

"How do you know?"

Angela stared back at Hana's questioning gaze, not understanding where this was going. *How did she know?* No, there was a more important question.

"*Why* do you even want to know? I can practically hear you start gagging the moment we enter a room together."

"Just answer the question first." Hana's voice was steady, with intent. She knew what she was doing. So Angela decided to humour her.

"Well, I..." Angela trailed off, hands waving futilely when she realised her mind was blank. "I... Um."

"Uh oh," Hana sang, impish grin forming on her lips. "Have we found a '*nothing*' that we'd like to talk about?"

She shot a glare which did nothing to shake Hana's grin from her face.

"I just need time to articulate it," Angela said, ignoring the girl's patronising hum. "I... I like everything about her. The way she moves. The way she speaks. Laughs. The way she doesn't hesitate to put herself in danger to protect others. Not the aftermath though, because *I* have to clean it up," Angela clarified, snapping out of her distant gaze for a second to see Hana nod.

"I love how she looks at me. How she holds me." Her breath hitched a little as her thoughts turned to things Hana would surely not appreciate hearing. "I love it when she puts her hand under my—"

"Alright! Stop right there!" Hana cut in, holding a hand up. "Don't start getting horny in front of me, thank you very much."

Biting down a smile at her successful ploy, Angela continued, "In all seriousness, Hana. I'd give everything, and do anything for her. And she would do the same for me." She turned towards the girl, resting an elbow on the table.

"Now, why did you want to know? Don't tell me you...have a thing for Fare-?"

"*What? No!*" A look of absolute disgust swept across Hana's face, so intense that Angela might have considered being offended. "Even the notion!"

"Then what?"

Hana hesitated. "Promise this will stay between us."

"Of course."

"There's this..." She lost steam, dragging one hand down her slowly reddening face. "God, this is so embarrassing. Okay." Hana took a deep breath and leant forward.

"There's this girl. That I knew from school. And I-, I really...kinda...like her. Like, *like* like. You know?" She paused to ensure Angela was following and received a nod. "Even after I joined the military, we kept talking to each other. Chats and things. Sometimes she'd even watch my streams. And, ah..."

She rubbed the back of her neck, lowering her voice to a conspiratorial whisper, "*Promise* you'll keep to this yourself?"

"Yes."

"And try not to...scold me?"

That gave Angela pause. "Did you do something, Hana?"

"I've...kinda been...talking to her. Even after joining Overwatch."

"Please tell me you're joking," Angela said, feeling her heart drop when Hana shook her head. "Hana, you know we can't afford to let anyone know we're active!"

"I know! I haven't told her anything!" She matched Angela's rapid whispering. "She thinks I'm away on some personal vacation. That's it! I swear!"

"You do know if anyone wanted to, they could track your location down, right?"

"Athena's got that covered. She's managed to mask the...whatever that has our location. I had to *beg* her to do it."

"And she kept it a secret? Even from Winston?"

"Yeah."

"I didn't even know she could do that." Angela leaned back into her chair, processing Hana's confession. She took another sip from her now-lukewarm tea, pushing down the hundred concerns that had arisen. Honestly, she expected better from the girl, but...

Angela turned back to Hana, who still looked downcast – now with a dash of shame – and decided to leave it for later. The fact that she's managed to keep the communications a secret for so long without incident, meant Athena had them covered. She hoped so, anyway.

"Alright. So you've been talking to her," Angela continued, returning to normal volume. "I'll assume there is a problem?"

"Well...no. Not really. Not with her anyway," Hana sighed, jabbing her spoon idly into the ice cream and eating another mouthful. "She's on holiday with her family, so we've not talked for almost a week. And I'm thinking of not talking to her again."

"Isn't that a bit sudden?"

"Yeah. But you know." She shrugged. "It's not gonna work out. I'm stuck here like some hermit and she's out there, surrounded by all the other fish in the sea." Then she slumped forward onto the table, resting her head in the crook of her elbow.

"God, but I miss her so much..." came the muffled whine.

Angela patted the girl on the back as she stewed in her own emotions. Part of her wanted to laugh. When she returned to Gibraltar, she never expected to deal with a 19-year-old's still undeveloped love life.

"Does she know how you feel?" Angela probed gently.

"I think so," Hana groaned, turning her head to look up at the blonde. Angela felt relief when she saw the girl's eyes were still dry. "On my last day of school before joining the military, I kissed her."

"Ooh."

"Don't 'ooh' me. I kissed her and she didn't say anything. She's been acting like nothing happened. Still a nice person to me, though. You know what?" Hana sprang up in her seat suddenly. "Fuck it. This isn't worth my time. I'm just gonna stop talking to her."

"That may be the best course of action, actually," Angela said, running a hand down her head. Hana did not smack her hand off as she usually did, only fixed her with a tired gaze. "Both for you, and for her."

Leaning her head against the back of her chair, Hana sighed. "I know. And so, the shitty week continues," she said in a mock-narrator voice.

Angela smiled. Even when down, the girl tried her best to be flippant. She drummed her fingers on the table, watching Hana attack the remaining ice cream.

"Hana," she said. "Fareeha and I are going to have dinner together tomo– I mean, tonight. Would you like to join us?"

"*What?*" Hana laughed. "And play third wheel in your date? Come on!" She shoved Angela's shoulder playfully.

"Well, it's not a *date* date. Fareeha's been feeling down about Sochi, so I want to take her out, make her feel better. You were on that mission too, weren't you?"

"Yeah. It was shit."

The third mission they had that ended with civilian casualties. This time, the death toll was almost double the last. Zarya was the most affected, jaw clamped and throwing herself into a never-ending gym routine until Angela staged an intervention. Fareeha practically seized Torbjörn's maintenance duties around the base, to quote the man's complaints, and Angela had scarcely seen her shadow since the team left med bay. Only by ambushing Fareeha when she returned to her room did Angela manage to secure this dinner.

"So join us. Who knows, it could be fun. Even take your mind off your troubles."

Hana stared at her, sucking on her bottom lip.

"Did I mention you'll get free food?"

"Oh, fine. But *please* promise me you won't be gross? Overly-gross?"

"I'll try."

There were few things in life more beautiful than the sight before her, Angela decided. The moment she heard Angela's footsteps, Fareeha spun around, a wide smile adorning her lips when their eyes met. She swept Angela into her arms, answering the unspoken greeting with a fervent kiss. Angela's body tingled at Fareeha's ferocity, clutching onto her shoulders and parting her lips. Moaning into Fareeha's mouth as the woman's tongue slid against hers, she arched her back as eager hands roamed her body, feeling her warm flesh through the thin sweater. It was all she could do to hang onto Fareeha and not fall to her knees. Although falling to her knees would not be such a bad idea after all...

All too soon, Fareeha pulled away, smiling at the whine that escaped Angela's throat. She ran a hand through loose blonde hair, granting one last kiss on moist lips before parting again.

"That'll have to last us through dinner," Fareeha said. "Nothing gross, remember?"

"You're making me regret asking her out," Angela replied. She ran one hand down a well-developed bicep, appreciating the way the sleeve hugged it just *so*.

"It's only for dinner." Fareeha's eyes followed the pale hand as it slid onto her forearm, exposed by the sleeve folded to her elbows. "We'll have the rest of the night to ourselves. And the next morning, if you're up to it."

"Promises, promises." Angela's lips curved in a coy smile. She played with a button on Fareeha's vest, leaning in for another kiss.

"We haven't even left the garage yet, you shits!"

They broke apart at the sound of Hana's exasperated voice, turning to the girl with unapologetic grins on their faces. Hana plodded over to them, the beginnings of regret already hanging over her.

"Hey Hana," Fareeha greeted her.

"Hey Captain." She slapped Fareeha's outstretched hand in a resounding high-five. "Try not to gross the kid out before we get the food, huh?"

"You're hardly a kid," Angela said as they climbed into the car.

"Compared to you hags, I *am* a kid."

Angela scoffed. "The tongue on this child. Shall we let her sit on the roadside while we toss her leftovers as punishment?"

"I say we just confiscate her computer," Fareeha said with a straight face, clearing the car out of the garage.

"Hey hey! No one touches my baby!"

"Did you *really* just ask if I'm old enough to drink alcohol?" Hana said in a low tone when the waiter left, leaning over to Fareeha. "I literally *kill* people for a living, and you just asked if I'm of age?!"

"I'm sorry, alright?" Fareeha said. "It's just reflex. Besides, you don't look like a drinker."

"Well, neither does Angie. But that doesn't stop her from drinking up all the wine back at base!"

"Excuse you, Hana," Angela cut in, finally done with hiding her smile behind a glass of water. "I look every inch a wine drinker."

"Yeah, speaking as a regular patient, that doesn't really instill confidence."

"Then you can patch yourself up next time," Angela snipped back smoothly, lifting the glass to her lips.

"Please." Hana rolled her eyes. "As if you can stop yourself from fussing over us when we return from a mission."

"It is my job, Hana. Besides, if I let you have your way, you'd probably use one of your soft drinks to disinfect your wounds."

Fareeha snorted, covering her mouth reflexively when Hana glared at her. "And she'd use her chips to staunch the bleeding," she said through parted fingers.

The waiter showed up just before Hana could retort, both women laughing silently into their hands as he served their drinks.

"Not fair," the Korean complained when the waiter left. "You're ganging up on me."

"We're only ganging up on you because we love you," Fareeha said in her best imitation of a motherly voice.

"Yeah right." Hana took a long pull on her straw, clearing a quarter of her soda as they got absorbed in their drinks. She tapped idly on the table when the silence continued.

Angela studied the girl discreetly, glad that she seemed to have recovered from their early-morning tête-à-tête. She did not need an emotional burden when she suffered enough physically. Watching Hana limp into the med bay, bleeding and bruised all over, was one of the hardest parts of her job. So young, and already putting her life on the line for the sake of the world. It was good that she had garnered a respectable amount of fame from her time as a gamer and mech pilot. Angela had seen too many heroes reduced to a footnote or just another name on the list, never to be remembered for their acts of valour. To have that happen to Hana would be a shame.

"What're you looking at?"

Angela jumped, realising she had not been that discreet after all. She hastily drew up an excuse,

aware that both Hana and Fareeha's eyes were upon her.

"I was just thinking how pretty you look without face paint." She smiled, reaching out to touch the girl's cheek.

"*War* paint," Hana corrected her, eyes brightening at the appetisers being placed on the table. Her hand shot towards the basket of chips, grappling a few onto her plate.

Angela turned her attention back to Fareeha, who dug into the salad they ordered. Sliding her foot out of her heel, she brushed across the other woman's ankle, feeling it jerk in surprise.

"You look pretty too, *habibti*," Angela said, winking at Fareeha when she looked up.

"And you look prettier, *Liebling*."

Her pronunciation was now perfect, after repeating it in Angela's ear a hundred times. Fareeha had started to pick up the few pet names Angela often used, surprising the blonde when it first rolled clumsily off her tongue. Then as she began familiarising herself with the words, Angela decided to return the favour, picking up more Arabic to drop on her girlfriend. She was rather proud of the progress she made – before this, she only recognised the sound of '*where's the fucking doctor?*'.

Maybe she should start adding a few more choice German phrases into Fareeha's dictionary. '*You look beautiful today*' would be a nice one. Or '*examine me, doctor*'. Perhaps '*kiss me*'? Or maybe just a '*please*'.

A shrewd smile formed on her lips as her plan started to take shape. Angela held Fareeha's gaze, foot moving slowly from her ankle and up her leg. Fareeha gave her an amused look, and turned towards the window without even a twitch on her face. *She's getting better at this game*, Angela thought, pushing her foot a little forward, accepting the challenge.

"Angie."

"Yes?"

"Wrong leg."

There was a sharp *thud* when her knee slammed into the table, shaking their drinks and food like an earthquake. More than a few curious stares from nearby tables fell upon them as Angela bent forward, hissing in pain. Fareeha and Hana's hands grabbed onto her arms at the same time, both ladies asking if she was okay.

"Yes, yes," Angela said through clenched teeth, giving them a pained smile. She straightened herself, all thoughts about her knee dissipating when she remembered what she had just done.

"I'm so sorry, Hana. I swear, I didn't know—"

"It's fine." Hana wove her hand nonchalantly, wearing not a single trace of distaste that Angela expected to see. Instead, an indulgent smirk, as one would give a friend who was being an idiot.

"Did I miss something?" Fareeha asked, frowning at the two women.

"No," Angela replied quickly. "Eat your salad."

After the...accident, Angela stuffed her foot back into her heel, and put on her best behaviour for the rest of the dinner. It earned a few occasional glances from Fareeha, who noticed the lack of her

usual advances. All it took was a subtle nod towards Hana, who was wolfing down her burger and fries, and Fareeha smiled in understanding. Even though she only understood half of it. And Angela was never going to explain the rest. Ever.

She tightened her hold on Fareeha's elbow, trying to will the embarrassing memory out of existence. At least they were walking back to quarters now. It meant she could scream about her indiscretion into her pillows soon.

"Are you alright?" Fareeha asked, smiling at Angela's rapid nod. "I'm actually proud of you today. You didn't try anything at all."

"We had company," she replied quietly, warmth gathering around her collar.

"Never stopped you before," Fareeha teased, giving Angela a peck on the cheek.

"There's a first time for everything, as they say."

Angela dropped her gaze to Hana, who halted abruptly in front of them, turning around with an almost bashful expression on her face.

"Hana?" Fareeha said, coming to a stop.

"I just wanted to say...thanks. For the dinner."

"You're welcome, Hana." Angela bent down to kiss the top of her head, and was surprised when she felt two slim arms circle around her for a hug. She returned the favour, feeling Hana tighten her hold slightly before releasing her.

"What, no hug for me?" Fareeha said. "Or do I have to buy you dinner too?"

"Yeah," Hana replied, swooping into the woman's arms anyway. They looked like they were trying to squeeze the air out of each other. "I'll put this one on credit."

"Can't wait to pay." Fareeha smiled as the girl let go, stepping backwards.

"Well. I'm gonna head to the kitchen first so...yeah. Bye. Good night!" With that, she practically ran down the corridor, rounding the corner before Angela could say *'be careful'*.

Letting out a breath, Angela hooked her hand around Fareeha's elbow again, steering them towards her room.

"Are you ever going to tell me why you invited her to our date?"

"No," Angela replied. "Doctor-patient confidentiality, remember?"

Fareeha chuckled, waiting as Angela opened the door. "You're just hogging all the gossip for yourself."

"Sweetie." Angela hooked two fingers into Fareeha's vest, tugging her into the room. "You should be glad. Otherwise our colleagues would know more about you than they ever should."

"Oh?" Fareeha's voice lowered into a smooth yet dangerous timbre, sending a thrill down Angela's spine. Closing the door felt like she had caged herself in with an animal. "What would they know, exactly?"

She placed a hand on Fareeha's chest as the woman leaned in, stopping her just before their lips touched. Step-by-step, Angela guided Fareeha backwards, eyes locked in smouldering tension,

until the back of her legs hit the couch. Fareeha was more than capable of resisting the force of her push, but she fell back onto the couch anyway, with a smirk on her face. The knowledge gave Angela a warm rush of power, and a subtle ache of tenderness, as she prowled over the woman.

"Guess."

Chapter End Notes

"habibti" = my love

A totally self-indulgent chapter. I just wanted the gamer daughter to spend time with her wine mom and bird mom.

Gay kudos to you if you spot the small reference to another gay thing.

Acceptance, Pt. 1

Chapter Summary

Lena brings back a new...'recruit'.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The sound of her name did not wake her so much as the chilly touch on the side of her neck. Jerking away from the contact, Fareeha forced her eyes open with difficulty, blinking hard until the blurred vision of Angela's office came into focus. She grunted, shimmying up the couch to rest her shoulders on the armrest. The touch from before landed on her clothed shoulder this time, drawing her attention towards the doctor.

"Go back to your room, Fareeha. It will be more comfortable there," Angela said softly.

Her tongue curled into a 'no' before Angela even finished speaking. But she kept quiet, pushing herself upright to face the doctor proper. Angela did not look all that sharp herself, truth be told. She had spent too many hours buried in her research and it showed. Her eyes were dull, shoulders slumped, stray blonde strands hanging every which way on her head.

"What time is it?" Fareeha muttered, squinting at the wall clock through lukewarm lighting.

"Nearing 3."

She sighed, "You're not sleeping tonight, are you?" It was phrased as a question, but they both knew it was a statement of fact. Too many times had they gone through this ritual. The way it ended would vary depending on Fareeha's level of energy, and she had little left after returning from a mission just that evening. It seemed the doctor had the upper hand this time.

Angela wheeled her chair closer and placed her fingers on Fareeha's jaw, waking her further with the coldness of her skin.

"That doesn't mean you have to stay here. Go and sleep, alright? I'll meet you for breakfast later."

A reluctant agreement sat right behind her teeth. But before Fareeha could vocalise it, rapid beeping from Angela's computer caught their attention. The blonde's forehead crinkled in confusion as she wheeled her chair back to the table. Fareeha followed, standing behind her to see an emergency transmission from...Tracer? Odd. There were no active assignments right now. Angela accepted the hail.

"Doc?" Tracer sounded hushed and out of breath.

"Lena?" Angela used her real name, aware of their deployment status as well. "Why are you using the emergency channel?"

"*Because it's an emergency?*" she replied, anxiety in her voice becoming more apparent with each syllable. "*Just to confirm, you're bound by the Hippocratic Oath, right? Help anyone in need, something like that?*"

"Not exactly *'bound'*, but yes. Are you hurt, Lena?"

"No. Well, yes. But there's someone else." There was a slight pause as Lena grunted, followed by sounds of something being shifted in the background. She took another few pants and continued, *"You're in your office, right?"*

"Yes."

"Mind opening your windows? I'm coming through there."

"Why can't you just come through the med bay?"

"I don't want to be seen. Please, Angie. Do this for me."

Angela hesitated, before looking back at Fareeha. The Egyptian nodded and opened the windows as requested, letting the cool night breeze mix with artificial air conditioning. Leaning out, Fareeha kept her eyes peeled for Lena.

"Okay, I'm coming around. Promise you won't freak out, alright?"

"Lena, what is happening?"

But there was no answer. It was not needed, for Lena finally turned the corner of the building. When she stepped into the light spilling out of Angela's office, Fareeha identified the source of the Brit's distress and felt her heart plummet through the floor. She froze in place, watching Lena struggle with the inert body slung over her shoulders, taking one arduous step after another. Both of them wore visible wounds, with blood trailing down their skin and staining their clothes.

"Angela," Fareeha called the doctor over, voice distant. She could not take her eyes off the familiar blue-skinned woman, whose head hung limply off the edge of Lena's shoulder. How could she? The woman was a Talon assassin. A threat. What in hell was Lena thinking?

She felt Angela pause beside her. Neither said a word until Lena stood right before them, breathing raggedly and peering up at them through cracked goggles. Perspiration stuck her brown bangs across her forehead and dripped off her chin. Her lips were unhealthily pale. She swayed on the spot for a second, then shifted her feet to steady herself.

"Lena—," Angela started, but Lena cut her off.

"Please, Angela. She needs help now. I mean, now." There was not a single trace of her usual gaiety. Just urgency bordering on panic and fear. She turned her pleading gaze to Fareeha, who did not wait for Angela's response and stretched out her arms.

Lena handed Widowmaker over gratefully, moving with all the cautiousness of someone handling a glass sculpture. Getting a secure hold on the woman – who was still facing down – Fareeha lifted her easily over the window ledge.

"Wait," Angela said, putting a hand on Fareeha's arm to still her. She swept away the long strands of hair stuck to the back of Widowmaker's neck, revealing a deep vertical incision. The cut sat wider in the middle, as though it had been forced open by a foreign object. Black congealed blood stained the surrounding blue skin, framed by dried tracks running down both sides of the neck. Fareeha could see hints of white through the torn muscles.

"That's where her tracker was," Lena explained shakily, having climbed into the office herself. "She cut in and made me... She made me..." Hitches in breath prevented her from finishing the sentence. She pressed the back of a quivering hand against her mouth, dark stains around her

fingertips completing the explanation for her.

"Operating theatre," Angela told Fareeha.

She sprang into action, carrying Widowmaker through the doors into the theatre just opposite Angela's office. Taking care not to jostle the body and keeping her mind off how cool the woman's skin felt, she laid Widowmaker down on the table. Angela strode past her, opening a locker and retrieving her tools. Fareeha watched the doctor roll up her sleeve and inject a stimulant into her forearm. She had seen Angela do this before, but this time she kept her mouth shut.

"Athena," Angela said, pulling on her scrubs. "Replace camera feed in the operating theatre and med bay with footage from 1 to 2am. Keep it on loop. Do not allow anyone control access. Authorisation: Ziegler – Epsilon, Alpha."

"Yes, Doctor."

She turned to Fareeha. "Use the staff on Lena. Leave no trace of her wounds. If anyone asks for me, tell them I'm occupied. Experiments. Do not reveal Widowmaker's presence."

Nodding sharply, she strode over to Lena, who stood at the foot of the table staring blankly. With a gentle but firm grip on Lena's shoulders, she steered the woman away and led her out the door. She settled the near-catatonic woman on a bed, retrieving Angela's medical trolley from the corner and the caduceus staff from the office. Since she spent so much time in med bay, Angela had decided to train Fareeha in basic first aid and patient care. Combined with field experience from her previous careers, she could act as the doctor's assistant whenever Angela needed it. Not that she needed it much.

Turning her attention to Lena, she moved the medical scanner down her body, relieved that the Brit was not severely injured. The two bullet wounds in her shoulder and thigh were clean, and the cuts around her body were not that deep. There were a few fractures in her ribs, but the staff would take care of that in an instant. And it did. Within mere seconds of activating the healing stream, Lena was as good as new. Physically.

Setting the staff on the trolley, Fareeha hooked her fingers under the straps of Lena's goggles and pulled it off her head. Lena looked up at her, eyes still dazed, as though she could not process her situation.

"Are you feeling alright, Lena?"

She nodded, gaze falling, before it went towards the operating theatre. Deciding that Lena could handle being by herself for a few minutes, Fareeha went back into Angela's office. She reappeared before the younger woman a short while later, holding a steaming mug of tea. Lena stared at it for an extended moment. Then her mouth slowly curved, before bursting out in laughter. Though short-lived, the laugh left behind a smile that set Fareeha's mind at ease. The Brit took the mug carefully with trembling fingers, and held it under her nose for a short sniff.

"You sure know how to make me happy," Lena said quietly. "Earl Grey?"

Fareeha nodded, though she was pretty sure the confirmation was unnecessary. Lena took a few sips, sighing as the hot liquid warmed her chest. Then she lowered the mug onto her lap, finger tracing the porcelain rim.

"She'll be fine, won't she?"

"Of course," Fareeha replied. "Angela can bring even the dead back to life. This is nothing for her."

Then silence fell between them, Lena fiddling more with the mug while Fareeha stood before her.

"Aren't you gonna ask why I was with Widowmaker?" Lena asked finally.

"No. I'd let you wait until you are ready. But Angela will want an explanation when she's out. So I suggest you start preparing one." She set a hand on messy brown hair, tousling it even further. "I'll get you a change of clothes in the meantime."

"Thanks, love." There was a hint of trepidation in her voice, and Fareeha shared the sentiment. Both of them very well knew that the doctor would be intense.

Angela looked like she was ready to strangle Lena. Though she sat at safe distance from the older woman, Lena still looked like she was being physically pummeled by the doctor as she kept talking.

"So I helped her get rid of her squad. Hit them before they realised what was happening. Then we destroyed all records they had of the mission. And..." She swallowed. "When we got into the car, she made me tear her tracker out and destroy it. After that I drove back here. Well actually, no. We ran out of gas halfway, so *I* had to run back. Carrying her."

"Where did you run out of gas?" Fareeha asked.

"El Zabal."

Her eyes widened. "You ran *all* the way from El Zabal? How did you even get through the border?"

"*Fareeha*," Angela said, shooting her a warning look. She sealed her mouth immediately, and relaxed only when the doctor turned her attention back to Lena, massaging a temple. "She said she wants to defect."

"Yeah."

"Because she was remembering her past life."

"Yeah."

"And? What did she plan to do after defecting?"

"I– I don't know," Lena stammered. "She didn't say, she just told me about this mission out of the blue. We didn't have time to plan much beyond '*shoot then leg it*'. But..." She paused, looking at Angela sheepishly. "I thought she could stay with us?"

Angela closed her eyes, revealing little through the twitch in her mouth. It may be Fareeha's imagination, but she could feel the woman's exasperation radiating off her being. Honestly, having the Talon sniper join them was not a very welcoming prospect. Talon and security reasons aside, it would take a long time for anyone to trust her. Fareeha could still remember the last three spots on her body where Widowmaker's bullets had bitten into. Not to mention that she was the one who put Ana out of commission. But something just felt *wrong* about dumping the injured woman and letting her fend for herself. Lena's distress aside, of course.

"Lena. Have you ever considered that this could be a trap?" Angela asked.

"No, it isn't. How can Talon plan a trap when they don't know about...this?" Lena made a distinct

'ah' sound before changing it to 'this'. If they were playing a word game, Fareeha would have bet on an 'us'.

"What makes you think they don't?"

"She would never tell them," Lena said fiercely.

"Maybe she doesn't have to. We don't know what kind of procedures they use on her. They might have...*mined* the information from her brain."

The Brit's fingers started fidgeting on her cup. It had been empty for a long while now, but holding onto it seemed to give her a sense of security. "But we tore out the tracker. Even if it was a trap, they wouldn't know where we are now. Unless there are others...?"

"No. Her body is clean. But you know as well as I, that they don't need our location to cause trouble within our ranks." Angela did not need to say it. The name '*Gerard*' echoed deafeningly in the silence that followed.

"So, what now? Are you planning to throw her out?" Lena's words were much quieter, but her intent was clear. If they threw Widowmaker out, they would lose an agent in Lena Oxton.

Angela returned her stare, pursed lips thinning even further. Fareeha let the battle of wills drag on a little longer before deciding enough was enough. She stepped in, placing a hand on Lena's shoulder.

"That's enough for now. It's late, and we're all exhausted. Come on." She helped Lena up from her chair. "I'll set up a bed for you."

When the women's eye contact did not break, Fareeha pushed on Lena's back and steered her towards the door. The younger woman's muscles were tense, the angles of her face hard as she looked away from Angela and followed Fareeha out. She shied away from the med bay beds, requesting to be set up in the operating theatre instead. Fareeha complied, and they had a cot laid out beside the operating table in no time.

"Thanks, love," Lena whispered before Fareeha left the theatre. She was sitting upright on the side of the cot, facing Widowmaker. Fareeha nodded and left her alone.

Angela was standing at the now-closed windows, arms crossed when Fareeha reentered the office. She sighed quietly, walking up to the doctor and circling her arms around her waist. Pressing up against Angela's stiff back, she tightened her hold and placed a kiss on her temple.

"Am I making a mistake, Fareeha?" Angela kept her gaze forward, but her arms dropped to rest on Fareeha's.

"I don't know," she answered honestly. Having Widowmaker in the base was not a very good feeling. Like having the tip of a dagger balanced on her back.

"She has killed so many. Innocents. Leaders. Our own." Angela's hand sought hers, and she returned the firm grip. "Does she deserve our help after what she has done?"

"Does it matter? You want to help, don't you?"

"What I want may put our lives in danger. It *will*." Angela turned in her arms. "Even if not from her alone, then from Talon when they realise she has defected."

"And throwing her out will put her life in danger. Look, you're overthinking this. You know

helping her is the right thing to do. Just be the doctor that you are and help her recover first. If not for Widowmaker, then..." Fareeha hesitated. "For Amélie."

Angela looked as if she had been dealt with a physical blow, nails digging into Fareeha's biceps. There was a momentary flare of anger behind blue irises, before it was dampened with a clench of her jaw.

"And if this backfires?" It was both an inquiry and a challenge.

"Then let me be the soldier that I am."

"Offering to bear the consequences of my actions is not going to make me feel better, Fareeha."

"Not your action. *Our* action. We will all decide what to do with her, won't we?"

Angela's eyes narrowed and she looked away, still obviously conflicted. Fareeha leaned forward, pressing her lips on Angela's forehead.

"Why don't you put the questions down and take a rest first? You'll think more clearly after a few hours' sleep. I'll wake you when Widowmaker comes to, alright?"

"No." Angela frowned at her, like she was offended by the mere thought of it. "I don't think that's—"

"I'm not going to let you work any longer. You haven't slept for the past day, you just had a three-hour surgery, and that stimulant crash is going to kick in soon."

"Fareeha—"

"You know better than to push yourself like that." She returned Angela's glare with a stoic gaze, keeping her hands on the blonde's hips even when she crossed her arms. "Don't make me play hardball."

"Hardball? Look, just let me—"

Angela raised her hands in reflex when she was yanked in, mouth tense against Fareeha's hard kiss. Though Fareeha stood against the push on her chest, she let Angela pull her head back.

"Fareeha, I need to—" Another kiss. "You can't—" Hands slipped to the sides of broad shoulders as Angela tilted her chin up. "You can't always—mmph." Her groan was muffled against Fareeha's mouth. "You can't win— All our— Arguments— By kissing me."

Angela's lips slid against hers when she claimed another kiss. "No. But I'll win this one," Fareeha breathed, holding back a smile when Angela pulled her in ever so slightly at their next lip-lock. She let the doctor deepen the kiss, finally handing the reins over. Angela reached up, gaining a firm hold on her nape — and that was when Fareeha noticed the slight tremble in her fingers.

She fumbled blindly for Angela's hair tie, pulling it off so her hair spilled down to her shoulders. Fareeha ran a hand through blonde tresses and pulled her head lightly back, a tiny moan emanating from Angela's throat. She planted a short kiss on parted lips, before stepping aside and sweeping Angela off her feet. Fareeha reached the couch in quick strides and set Angela down gently. The blonde kept her arms raised, but when Fareeha moved to her feet instead of falling into her embrace, she finally caught on.

"You cheated," she accused, disbelief colouring her tone. Fareeha smiled as she removed Angela's flats, placing them neatly at the foot of the couch.

"All's fair in love and war, *ya albi*." Fareeha took the pillows beside Angela's legs and placed them under her head. She took a slim hand, noting the weakness in her grip. The crash was coming soon. Pressing her lips on Angela's knuckles, she smiled down at the doctor.

"Leave the worrying to me for now. I'll keep watch, okay?"

Angela nodded, and Fareeha heaved a sigh of relief. She set the doctor's hand down, then got to her feet. "Now to go take care of the other one."

She had no doubt that Lena was still watching over Widowmaker. What were the implications of that, she was unsure and certainly was not in a mood to figure it out now.

"Good night," Fareeha said, pausing at the door with a hand on the light switch.

"I'll get you back for this," Angela replied.

Fareeha arched a brow. "And here I was, planning to get you a blanket. Maybe I should let you freeze instead."

"You wouldn't," Angela said smugly, and she was right. Fareeha did get her a blanket anyway. Thankfully she was not awake to gloat about it.

Chapter End Notes

"ya albi" (Arabic) = my heart

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